

UTAH Conservation SHOWCASE



Strong Partnership Yields Successful Watershed Protection Project

Robert Gappmayer has been involved in farming since he was a boy in the small Utah farming community of Wallsburg. The beautiful green valley, ideal for raising cattle, has a stream running through it that provides water for irrigation and livestock. About seven years ago, a state water quality study flagged the stream as exceeding phosphorous and sediment standards. Robert, a member of the local Wasatch County Conservation District board, said for some time they were stymied on what to do. They decided to talk with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) about Farm Bill conservation programs that could help them clean up the stream, which flows into Deer Creek Reservoir, a major drinking water supply for Utah and Salt Lake Counties.

NRCS District Conservationist David Hanson, along with planners and engineers, conducted a study and developed a coordinated resource management plan that applied best management practices to 1.7 miles of the stream. Most of the farmers along the stream have joined in to fence the stream from their cattle, providing only crossing corridors that allow the cattle to water and rotate to other pastures. Contractors cleaned up old cars and debris in the stream and installed coconut fiber matting to protect the banks from erosion. Thousands of willows and other protective plants were planted to add stability and benefit wildlife.



Robert Gappmayer (right) provided leadership to the Wallsburg Stream Restoration Project, which included streambank stabilization (left) on his farm.

Everyone agrees that the joint effort between NRCS, Utah's Division of Wildlife Resources, the Utah Association of Conservation Districts and the Utah Grazing Improvement Program (GIP), made the project successful. More than \$600,000 was spent using federal and state financial assistance from the Farm Bill's Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), along with other partners.

Water quality monitoring has begun and will continue for several years to record anticipated changes in water quality. "I have a deep love for the ground and the environment. I want to see it used and I want to take care of it," said Gappmayer. "That's the reason I'm involved with this project because I can see the benefit and I'm totally enthusiastic about what we're going to see here in the next few years."